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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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Applicant(s): Jean-Pierre Giraud	: Group Art Unit: 3653
Serial No.: 09/751,191	: Examiner: Michael E. Butler
Filed: December 29, 2000	: Attorney Docket No.: 62357.013900
For: METER STRIP DISPENSER ASSEMBLY	:

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**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT IN RESPONSE TO JULY 17, 2003 OFFICE ACTION**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313

Sir:

**INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:**

This Preliminary Amendment is filed in reply to the Office Action issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on July 17, 2003 in connection with the above-identified patent application. The July 17, 2003 Office Action provided a period of 3 months in which to file a response, i.e., by October 17, 2003. A petition for a three-month extension of time is being filed concurrently herewith. Accordingly, a reply to the July 17, 2003 Office Action would have been due on January 17, 2004. However, January 17, 2004 was a Saturday and Monday, January 19, 2004 was a Federal Holiday. Thus, a reply to the July 17, 2003 Office Action is now due January 20, 2004 and this Amendment is being timely filed.